

**§ 250.1713**

**30 CFR Ch. II (7–1–10 Edition)**

(14) Your plans to protect archaeological and sensitive biological features, including anchor damage during plugging operations, a brief assessment of the environmental impacts of the plugging operations, and the procedures and mitigation measures you will take to minimize such impacts.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66048, Oct. 30, 2002]

**§ 250.1713 Must I notify MMS before I begin well plugging operations?**

You must notify the appropriate District Manager at least 48 hours before beginning operations to permanently plug a well.

**§ 250.1714 What must I accomplish with well plugs?**

You must ensure that all well plugs:

- (a) Provide downhole isolation of hydrocarbon and sulphur zones;
- (b) Protect freshwater aquifers; and
- (c) Prevent migration of formation fluids within the wellbore or to the seafloor.

**§ 250.1715 How must I permanently plug a well?**

(a) You must permanently plug wells according to the table in this section. The District Manager may require additional well plugs as necessary.

**PERMANENT WELL PLUGGING REQUIREMENTS**

If you have—	Then you must use—
(1) Zones in open hole .....	Cement plug(s) set from at least 100 feet below the bottom to 100 feet above the top of oil, gas, and fresh-water zones to isolate fluids in the strata.
(2) Open hole below casing .....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A cement plug, set by the displacement method, at least 100 feet above and below deepest casing shoe;</li> <li>(ii) A cement retainer with effective back-pressure control set 50 to 100 feet above the casing shoe, and a cement plug that extends at least 100 feet below the casing shoe and at least 50 feet above the retainer; or</li> <li>(iii) A bridge plug set 50 feet to 100 feet above the shoe with 50 feet of cement on top of the bridge plug, for expected or known lost circulation conditions.</li> </ul>
(3) A perforated zone that is currently open and not previously squeezed or isolated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A method to squeeze cement to all perforations;</li> <li>(ii) A cement plug set by the displacement method, at least 100 feet above to 100 feet below the perforated interval, or down to a casing plug, whichever is less; or</li> <li>(iii) If the perforated zones are isolated from the hole below, you may use any of the plugs specified in paragraphs (a)(3)(iii)(A) through (E) of this section instead of those specified in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) and (a)(3)(ii) of this section.</li> <li>(A) A cement retainer with effective back-pressure control set 50 to 100 feet above the top of the perforated interval, and a cement plug that extends at least 100 feet below the bottom of the perforated interval with at least 50 feet of cement above the retainer;</li> <li>(B) A bridge plug set 50 to 100 feet above the top of the perforated interval and at least 50 feet of cement on top of the bridge plug;</li> <li>(C) A cement plug at least 200 feet in length, set by the displacement method, with the bottom of the plug no more than 100 feet above the perforated interval;</li> <li>(D) A through-tubing basket plug set no more than 100 feet above the perforated interval with at least 50 feet of cement on top of the basket plug; or</li> <li>(E) A tubing plug set no more than 100 feet above the perforated interval topped with a sufficient volume of cement so as to extend at least 100 feet above the uppermost packer in the wellbore and at least 300 feet of cement in the casing annulus immediately above the packer.</li> </ul>
(4) A casing stub where the stub end is within the casing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A cement plug set at least 100 feet above and below the stub end;</li> <li>(ii) A cement retainer or bridge plug set at least 50 to 100 feet above the stub end with at least 50 feet of cement on top of the retainer or bridge plug; or</li> <li>(iii) A cement plug at least 200 feet long with the bottom of the plug set no more than 100 feet above the stub end.</li> </ul>
(5) A casing stub where the stub end is below the casing.	A plug as specified in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of this section, as applicable.
(6) An annular space that communicates with open hole and extends to the mud line.	A cement plug at least 200 feet long set in the annular space. For a well completed above the ocean surface, you must pressure test each casing annulus to verify isolation.
(7) A subsea well with unsealed annulus.	A cutter to sever the casing, and you must set a stub plug as specified in paragraphs (a)(4) and (a)(5) of this section.
(8) A well with casing .....	A cement surface plug at least 150 feet long set in the smallest casing that extends to the mud line with the top of the plug no more than 150 feet below the mud line.
(9) Fluid left in the hole .....	A fluid in the intervals between the plugs that is dense enough to exert a hydrostatic pressure that is greater than the formation pressures in the intervals.
(10) Permafrost areas .....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A fluid to be left in the hole that has a freezing point below the temperature of the permafrost, and a treatment to inhibit corrosion; and</li> <li>(ii) Cement plugs designed to set before freezing and have a low heat of hydration.</li> </ul>

(b) You must test the first plug below the surface plug and all plugs in lost circulation areas that are in open hole. The plug must pass one of the following tests to verify plug integrity:

(1) A pipe weight of at least 15,000 pounds on the plug; or

(2) A pump pressure of at least 1,000 pounds per square inch. Ensure that the pressure does not drop more than 10 percent in 15 minutes. The District Manager may require you to tests other plug(s).

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 44265, July 1, 2002; 67 FR 66048, Oct. 30, 2002]

**§ 250.1716 To what depth must I remove wellheads and casings?**

(a) Unless the District Manager approves an alternate depth under paragraph (b) of this section, you must remove all wellheads and casings to at least 15 feet below the mud line.

(b) The District Manager may approve an alternate removal depth if:

(1) The wellhead or casing would not become an obstruction to other users of the seafloor or area, and geotechnical and other information you provide demonstrate that erosional processes capable of exposing the obstructions are not expected; or

(2) You determine, and MMS concurs, that you must use divers, and the seafloor sediment stability poses safety concerns; or

(3) The water depth is greater than 800 meters (2,624 feet).

**§ 250.1717 After I permanently plug a well, what information must I submit?**

Within 30 days after you permanently plug a well, you must submit form MMS-124, Application for Permit to Modify (subsequent report), to the appropriate District Manager, and include the following information:

(a) Information included in § 250.1712 with a final well schematic;

(b) Description of the plugging work;

(c) Nature and quantities of material used in the plugs; and

(d) If you cut and pulled any casing string, the following information:

(1) A description of the methods used (including information on explosives, if used);

(2) Size and amount of casing removed; and

(3) Casing removal depth.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

**TEMPORARY ABANDONED WELLS**

**§ 250.1721 If I temporarily abandon a well that I plan to re-enter, what must I do?**

You may temporarily abandon a well when it is necessary for proper development and production of a lease. To temporarily abandon a well, you must do all of the following:

(a) Submit form MMS-124, Application for Permit to Modify, and the applicable information required by § 250.1712 to the appropriate District Manager and receive approval;

(b) Adhere to the plugging and testing requirements for permanently plugged wells listed in the table in § 250.1715, except for § 250.1715 (a)(8). You do not need to sever the casings, remove the wellhead, or clear the site;

(c) Set a bridge plug or a cement plug at least 100-feet long at the base of the deepest casing string, unless the casing string has been cemented and has not been drilled out. If a cement plug is set, it is not necessary for the cement plug to extend below the casing shoe into the open hole;

(d) Set a retrievable or a permanent-type bridge plug or a cement plug at least 100 feet long in the inner-most casing. The top of the bridge plug or cement plug must be no more than 1,000 feet below the mud line. MMS may consider approving alternate requirements for subsea wells case-by-case;

(e) Identify and report subsea wellheads, casing stubs, or other obstructions that extend above the mud line according to U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) requirements; and

(f) Except in water depths greater than 300 feet, protect subsea wellheads, casing stubs, mud line suspensions, or other obstructions remaining above the seafloor by using one of the following methods, as approved by the District Manager or Regional Supervisor:

(1) A caisson designed according to 30 CFR 250, subpart I, and equipped with aids to navigation;